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Dear District Superintendents, County Superintendents, and Charter School Administrators:

UPDATE ON CALIFORNIA'S PLAN OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires that, by 2005-06, all students will be taught by "highly qualified" teachers in all core academic subject areas. During its June 11, 2003 meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted (in concept) a plan to meet this NCLB requirement in California. The SBE staff are consulting with the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) to confirm that this plan comports with NCLB requirements. Once that assurance is gained, the SBE will confirm its approval at the July 2003 meeting and, if necessary, begin the regulatory process.

Updates on this, and other NCLB issues are available on the California Department of Education's (CDE) NCLB Web site, <<http://www.cde.ca.gov/pr/nclb>>, or the SBE Web site at <<http://www.cde.ca.gov/board>>, where the SBE "adopted in concept plan" can also be found. While the plan is not completely adopted at this point and may require regulations to implement, this letter is intended to provide you with the latest information with which to plan. Please check the SBE Web site after July 11, 2003, for information regarding any July SBE action.

Specifically, this letter provides information on the following issues:

- California's conceptual plan for meeting the teacher requirements of NCLB;
- Complying with the NCLB teacher requirements in your district;
- Local education agencies (LEA) notification obligations to parents and the community;
- LEA reporting obligations to CDE; and
- Implementation priorities.

The NCLB requirement for highly qualified teachers is a goal for all teachers of core academic subject areas which, by federal plan, are English, reading/language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography. Please note that all LEAs, irrespective of their specific funding sources, are required to adopt and meet this goal by 2005-06.

California's Conceptual Plan for Meeting the Teacher Requirements of NCLB

The SBE's plan mirrors, as closely as possible, California's credential system. In some instances, however, the demonstration of subject-matter competency required by the NCLB differs from that currently required by California. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) is in the process of revising certain elements of the credential process in order to bring it into alignment with NCLB. For teachers currently in classrooms, the LEAs will need to determine how quickly and by which option each teacher should meet the NCLB teacher requirements. The available options are briefly presented below.

NCLB Teacher Requirements

To meet the NCLB teacher requirement, an individual needs to meet the following criteria:

- Be fully credentialed or in an approved intern program for less than three years, AND
- Have demonstrated subject matter competence appropriate for the grade level and core academic subjects for one's current assignment.

Classroom teachers authorized under emergency permits, waivers, or pre-intern certificates do not meet the NCLB teacher requirement for those assignments.

Complying with the NCLB Teacher Requirements in Your District

The attached table identifies categories of teachers and when they must meet the NCLB teacher requirements. In order to apply the plan correctly, it is important to note the distinctions based on when a teacher was credentialed, grade span responsibilities, and, to some extent, a teacher's funding source.

Time in the Profession

The NCLB allows teachers to demonstrate subject matter competency differently depending upon whether the teacher is "new" or "not new" to the profession. In concept, the SBE has adopted the following plans that pertain to "time in the profession:"

Teachers who are "new" to the profession are those who, on or after July 1, 2002, began an approved intern program or received a full credential.

Teachers "not new" to the profession are those who, before July 1, 2002, were enrolled in, or had completed, an approved intern program or received a full credential.

NCLB Grade Span Distinctions

The NCLB distinguishes between elementary teachers and secondary teachers in addition to time in the profession. “New to the profession” elementary teachers must demonstrate subject-matter competence by passing a “rigorous state test.” In contrast, “new to the profession” secondary (middle/junior high/high school) teachers may demonstrate subject-matter competence through a rigorous state test, completion of associated majors or graduate degrees, or by gaining an advanced credential or certification (i.e., National Board Certification).

“Not new” teachers have an additional process for demonstrating subject matter competency. The High Objective Uniform State System of Evaluation (HOUSE) is an option allowed in NCLB to demonstrate current teachers’ subject matter competency with minimal disruption to the instructional program and is the same across grade spans. Further guidance on this option will be sent to you later this summer.

Teacher’s Funding

There is a category of teachers who, by federal law, are the top priority for meeting the NCLB requirements. These are individuals who were hired after the first day of class of the 2002-03 school year into Title I, Part A-supported programs. For Title I Schoolwide schools, this includes all core academic subject teachers. At Targeted Assistance schools, it is only those teachers paid with Title I, Part A funds. While many of the teachers hired into Title I programs after that date will meet the requirements of NCLB (see attached chart), elementary teachers who earned their credential through coursework need time to demonstrate their subject matter competency. The SBE, therefore, is proposing a limited transitional plan to allow LEAs until June 30, 2004, to ensure that new hires into Title I programs have demonstrated their subject matter competency if they have not done so already.

LEA Notification Obligations to Parents and the Community

All LEAs in California must provide information to their parents and local communities. Districts will be reporting their NCLB data to their local communities via the District Accountability Report Card (DARC) and the School Accountability Record Cards (SARC). Templates for those plans will be available at <www.cde.ca.gov>. As in the past, the templates will contain information available from the CDE and will require completion of other data elements by the respective districts and schools.

Schools receiving funds under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I, Part A, must also inform their parents that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. In addition, LEAs must provide timely notification to parents of students who have been assigned or have been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher of a core academic subject who does not meet the teacher requirements of NCLB.

LEA Reporting Obligations to CDE

An LEA must report, annually, to the CDE the percent of core academic subject area classes taught by teachers meeting the NCLB teacher requirements.

The specific mechanisms for gathering this data from the LEAs are being developed. A baseline count of the percent of core academic subject area classes taught by teachers meeting the NCLB teacher requirements will be generated by the CDE for the federal September 2003 deadline. California Basic Education Data System (CBEDS) data will be used to approximate the indicators. As a transitional system, the CDE will request data from LEAs on these elements via the Consolidated Application (ConApp). In the future, the CBEDS Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF) will be modified to reflect the federal reporting requirements.

Implementation Priorities

Ensuring that all students have highly qualified teachers is a high priority for California. While California has until the 2005-06 school year to achieve the overall goal, I would encourage you to identify those decisions and activities that would most quickly improve the number of teachers meeting the NCLB requirements in California classrooms. To assist you in identifying possible priority activities, please consider the following:

- Identify any teachers newly hired by the district after the first day of class of the 2002-03 school year and funded under Title I. Any of these teachers who have not already demonstrated subject-matter competence should be helped in developing individual professional development plans to ensure they meet the NCLB teacher requirements as quickly as possible, and certainly by June 30, 2004;
- Focus on recruiting and hiring individuals for core academic subject classes who already meet the NCLB teacher requirements, particularly when filling positions funded with Title I funds (in a schoolwide school, this means all core academic subject classes teachers);

- Use state and federal incentives to help attract, recruit, and retain teachers who meet the NCLB requirements. Utilize Title II, Part A funds (and the required set-aside for Title I Part A) to provide high-quality professional development to teachers who do not meet the NCLB requirements. This could include helping teachers complete credential programs, graduate programs, and advanced credentialing (e.g., the National Board Exams) or pass the approved subject matter examination;
- Consider developing or aligning with an approved internship program;
- Monitor progress and support teachers who are completing credential requirements to ensure timely completion; and
- Provide equitable distribution of fully credentialed teachers in district classrooms including low-performing schools.

We appreciate that the teacher requirements of NCLB may pose a particular set of challenges for middle schools, small high schools, alternative education programs, some special education programs, and other self-contained secondary classrooms. We understand that the USDOE will be coming out with a new Guidance this summer that may provide some assistance in these areas.

Concerted, uncompromising efforts by every district to staff all classrooms with highly qualified, talented teachers will enable us to meet this historic milestone. Be assured of my commitment in working with you on this important endeavor.

For questions or additional information, please contact Rebecca Parker, Consultant, Professional Development Unit, at (916) 323-5595 or by e-mail at [<rparker@cde.ca.gov>](mailto:rparker@cde.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

JACK O'CONNELL

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Attachment

Attachment

Below is a chart that identifies the effect of this draft proposal on different categories of teachers.

Teachers already meeting NCLB Teacher Requirements	Teachers who have until the end of 2005-2006 school year to meet NCLB Teacher Requirements	Teachers who must meet the NCLB Teacher Requirements when hired
Elementary School teachers who are in approved intern programs for less than three years or have a credential by passing State Multiple Subject examination.	<p>All teachers hired <u>before</u> the first day students report to school per the district school calendar in 2002-2003, regardless of grade span taught or whether the teacher is “new” or “not new” to the profession.</p> <p>Most of these teachers will be “not new” to the profession and will demonstrate subject matter competency through HOUSE.</p>	<p>Teachers hired to teach in Title I, Part A, programs** after the first day students report to school per the district school calendar in 2002-2003, regardless of grade span taught or whether the teacher is “new” or “not new” to the profession.</p> <p>Some of these teachers will be “not new” to the profession and can use the HOUSE method to demonstrate subject matter competency.</p> <p>Teachers “new” to the profession who have not demonstrated subject matter competency will have to do so.</p>
Middle and High School teachers who are in approved intern programs for less than three years or have a credential by passing a State Subject Matter examination in the subject they teach.*	Teachers not teaching in a Title I program hired <u>after</u> the first day students report to school per the district school calendar in 2002-2003, regardless of grade span taught or whether the teacher is “new” or “not new” to the profession.	
Middle and High School teachers who have met subject matter requirements through a Commission on Teacher Credentialing approved university subject matter program or who have earned a supplementary authorization based on a degree or major in the subjects taught*		
All “not new” teachers that are nationally board certified in the subjects taught		

*A teacher who teaches multiple core subjects may demonstrate subject matter competency in a different manner for each subject taught.

** If working in a school-wide Title I, Part A, school, the requirement applies to all teachers of core academic subjects. In a Title I, Part A, targeted assistance program, the requirement applies only to teachers paid from Title I, Part A, funds, and teaching core academic subjects.